

The Democratic Party and Trump's coup

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Following Donald Trump's bloodthirsty speech to Special Forces soldiers at Fort Bragg on Tuesday—an open declaration of war on the American people—the US government is accelerating its preparations for military violence on a massive scale.

The *Washington Post* reported Wednesday evening that Trump "is prepared to send National Guard troops into more U.S. cities if protests against immigration raids expand beyond Los Angeles, administration officials said Wednesday—potentially opening the door to the most extensive use of military force on American soil in modern history."

The *Post* cited testimony from Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth before a House committee, in which he stated, "I think we're entering another phase, especially under President Trump with his focus on the homeland, where the National Guard and Reserves become a critical component of how we secure that homeland."

In just two days, on Saturday, 7,000 troops—backed by hundreds of tanks, armored vehicles and helicopters—will descend on Washington, D.C. for a military parade ostensibly marking the 250th anniversary of the US Army but coinciding with Trump's 79th birthday. Trump has openly threatened the use of "heavy force" against anyone who dares to protest during the event, whether peaceful or not.

There is a vast chasm between the reality of the situation and the response from the media and the Democratic Party. While some leading Democrats have acknowledged that Trump is waging a war on democratic rights and the Constitution, their actions remain utterly detached from the scope of the threat. As Trump speaks in the language of civil war and prepares the machinery of state repression, the Democrats respond with lawsuits and platitudes.

California Governor Gavin Newsom, in a nationally televised speech Tuesday night, criticized Trump for "arresting dishwashers, gardeners, day laborers and seamstresses" and added that the deployments were a "brazen abuse of power by a sitting president ... a

president who wants to be bound by no law or constitution."

Newsom concluded by pointing out that Trump's proclamation seizing control of the National Guard "made that order apply to every state in this nation. This is about all of us. This is about you. California may be first—but it clearly won't end here." He added, "Democracy is under assault right before our eyes—the moment we've feared has arrived."

But what does the Democratic governor of the largest US state, with the fifth largest economy in the world, propose to do about it? Newsom has filed a federal lawsuit challenging Trump's takeover of the California National Guard as illegal and unconstitutional. But he has not withdrawn the Guard from Los Angeles, let alone called for mass opposition.

Indeed, the Democrats are working to legitimize the very lies used by Trump as his "Reichstag Fire"—that is, the pretext for dictatorship. Newsom has deployed 800 state police to Los Angeles to crack down on protests. Mayor of Los Angeles Karen Bass, also a Democrat, has imposed a multi-day curfew on parts of the city and flooded downtown with cops who have arrested hundreds of protesters over the past three days.

The political line coming from Newsom and Bass is: "Let us handle the suppression of protests. We can do it ourselves."

At a press briefing Wednesday, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries did not even mention the events in Los Angeles in their opening remarks. Only when directly asked about Trump's threats did they respond, with Jeffries declaring, "Gavin Newsom and Karen Bass have both pointed out, and we agree, here in the capital, anybody who breaks the law, anybody who assaults police officers, anybody who destroys property, should be held accountable to the full extent of the law, and state and local law enforcement officials are prepared to do that."

It is the Trump administration, however, that is "breaking the law" in the most extreme and flagrant

manner possible, through a conspiracy to overturn the Constitution. The whole framework within which the military operation in Los Angeles has been concocted—with talk of an “invasion” and “insurrection”—is a brazen and filthy lie, to which the Democrats give credence. The president who is screaming fire is himself the arsonist.

Even while Democrats mouth criticism of Trump, it is from the standpoint of somehow trying to suppress popular opposition and chloroform the situation. No Democrat has warned that Trump’s military parade in Washington DC, set for this Saturday, June 14, could well be the occasion for an outright military takeover in the US capital.

There is no call from the Democrats that Trump and his would-be fascist junta should be held accountable for invading the second largest American city (as a *New York Times* columnist pointed out, Trump now has more soldiers under his command in Los Angeles than in Syria and Iraq combined).

And none of them have suggested the most obvious and necessary measure to stop the assault on democracy: the removal of the conspirator from his position.

Fifty years ago, Republican President Richard Nixon was forced to resign from office over the Watergate scandal, which involved crimes against democracy that pale in significance compared to Trump’s actions. Today, however, the political system is so rotten and corrupted that no leading Democrat has called for Trump and his coup plotters to be held legally responsible or impeached. The list of top Democrats who have said little or nothing in the past week includes ex-presidents Clinton, Obama and Biden.

The trade union apparatus is likewise doing nothing as the conspiracy unfolds. The social media pages of the AFL-CIO and its affiliated unions are nearly silent on the developing coup, aside from a few perfunctory posts about the arrest of SEIU California President David Huerta—which the apparatus did nothing to oppose.

The only mention on the AFL-CIO’s X (formerly Twitter) page of the military mobilization is a post suggesting that Trump’s birthday parade on Saturday is a waste of \$45 million—money that, it claims, could be better spent elsewhere. As if this is the issue, and not the conspiracy to overturn the Constitution!

The X page of the United Auto Workers features a video of UAW President Shawn Fain promoting economic nationalism and the union’s support for the tariffs and trade war policies advanced by Trump. Amid

the most extreme political crisis in modern American history, the UAW is busy celebrating General Motors’ supposed benevolence and showcasing fabric art donated to Walter Reuther in the 1950s.

As for the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) union, it remains silent while the Trump administration seizes and deports immigrant food workers. This includes nearly 100 workers from the Glenn Valley Foods plant in Omaha, who were frog-marched at gunpoint from their workplace earlier this week.

There is vast and growing popular opposition to the authoritarian rampage of the Trump administration, expressed in a wave of demonstrations across the United States. Thousands of protests are scheduled for Saturday in every major city and countless smaller towns. Yet the sentiment of millions finds no genuine expression within the political establishment or any of the official institutions of capitalist society.

This political reality demonstrates that the fight against the coup must be developed on an independent basis.

Every plant, office and neighborhood must become a center of organized opposition to this massive assault on democratic rights. This means the building of rank-and-file committees in every workplace and neighborhood to prepare a general strike to stop the coup and defend democratic rights. And it means the development of an independent political movement of the working class, in opposition to Trump and both parties of the capitalist ruling elite, on the basis of a socialist program.

The strategy and perspective required to develop the movement against Trump’s coup will be the focus of an urgent online meeting hosted by the *World Socialist Web Site* on Sunday, June 15, at 4:00 p.m. EDT: “Trump’s Coup and How to Stop It.” We urge all our readers to register to attend and to promote the meeting as widely as possible to your coworkers and on social media.



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